

# Gracefully supersized

BY JOE SAGE

**B**uick product and positioning efforts continue their big push, including this all-new gen-two Enclave SUV, with trim levels up to their new top-luxe Avenir (our Premium is one level shy of that).

We're still getting used to Buick's new grille, which replaces the previous bold waterfall with an Opel-esque badge-and-bars backed by a subtle waterfall, enough to tag it as a Buick on second glance, if not first. And the classic portholes have been reduced to an item on the front fender flanks that's just the lightest nod to that ancient heritage.

Until fairly recently, Buick had to clarify its spot between Chevrolet and Cadillac against corporate cousins Pontiac, Oldsmobile, Saturn, even Saab, and for utilities also against GMC. It's all simpler now, with just Buick (and more truck-rooted GMC) falling between Chevy and Cadillac—at least within GM, though the new grille may distinguish them less against another many dozen brands.

Related to Chevy Traverse and Cadillac XT5, Enclave fits neatly between those in price and luxury level. While Cadillac, Chevy and GMC go one size bigger (Escalade, Tahoe-Suburban and Yukon), Enclave is Buick's biggest. Its sleek exterior belies its

size—three rows, seven seats, though third-row legroom makes it a better fit for a growing family, leaving GM's bigger boats for executive teams.

The craft is quite maneuverable. With streamlined form, short overhangs front and rear, and its transverse V6 tucked under a tidy hood, Enclave is well planted and capable of surprisingly tight moves. Its engine placement also gives this vehicle one of the smoother auto start-stop functions.

The premium cockpit gets above average marks overall—functions and preferences are well considered—but a mixed grade for connectivity (wireless charging is a plus, while plug-in options and placements are debatable), as well as a list of small nits, such as a punishing set of seat memory controls, a parking brake control that you set or release exactly the same way, auto-down front windows on both sides but auto-up on the left side only, and several other things noted in our logbook. Ours had separate moonroofs front and rear, a plus in our hot, sunny climate, where people can have different preferences inside.

With Enclave already completely new for 2018, changes for 2019 will be minimal—the previously eponymous base Enclave becomes Preferred (and remains front-drive-only); an automatic heated steering wheel is standard on Premium and Avenir top trims; and Avenir will offer an ebony interior. And the base price for 2019 rises by just 20 bucks.

Buick Enclave looks and feels big but not too

## SPECIFICATIONS

<b>SEATING</b> .....	three rows / seven seats
<b>ENGINE</b> .....	3.6L DOHC direct inj V6, cast alum block-head
<b>DRIVETRAIN</b> .....	AWD (FWD available)
<b>HP/TORQUE</b> .....	310 hp / 266 lb-ft
<b>TRANSMISSION</b> .....	Hydra-Matic 9T65 9-spd auto
<b>SUSPENSION</b> .....	<b>F:</b> MacPherson indep w hydraulic control arm ride bushing, hollow stblzr bar; <b>R:</b> 5-link indep, aux spring aids, hollow stblzr bar. AVAILABLE (AVENIR TOP TRIM): contin variable real-time damping
<b>STEERING</b> .....	elec var-effort pwr w active return asst
<b>BRAKES</b> .....	4-whl disc, var wv power assist, Duralife rotors, low-drag calipers, no further details or specs
<b>WHEELS/TIRES</b> .....	18" P225/65R18 / opt 20" P255/55R20
<b>LENGTH/WHEELBASE</b> .....	204.3 / 120.9 in
<b>TURNING CIRCLE</b> .....	39.0 ft
<b>LEGROOM (F/2/3)</b> .....	41.2 / 38.9 / 33.5 in
<b>CARGO VOL</b> .....	23.6 / 58.0 / 97.6 + 3.1 underfloor cu.ft
<b>WEIGHT</b> .....	base 4358 lb
<b>TOW CAPACITY</b> .....	w pkg 5000 lb
<b>FUEL CAPACITY</b> .....	(AWD) 21.7 gal
<b>MPG</b> .....	(AWD) 17/25/20 (city/hwy/comb)
<b>BASE PRICE</b> .....	<b>\$50,315</b>
<b>SATIN STEEL METALLIC PAINT</b> .....	395
<b>DUAL MOONROOF:</b> Power front, fixed rear.....	1400
<b>WHEELS:</b> 20" aluminum.....	1400
<b>REAR CAMERA:</b> Rear camera inside mirror, surround vision, birds-eye, front-side-rear cameras.....	825
<b>TRAILERING:</b> Heavy duty cooling system.....	650
<b>NAVIGATION</b> .....	495
<b>DESTINATION CHARGE</b> .....	975
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$56,455</b>

big. Its layout is neat and tidy outside, but capacious and capable inside. Its premium fitment level is both executive- and family-ready. Styling is tasteful and a tiny bit tough. Enclave hits quite a few best-of-both nails squarely on the head. ■

